

Good morning, Chairwoman Stillman, Chairman Dargan and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee.

My name is Steven Rief, and I am President of the Connecticut State Police Union.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony to you today in **FAVOR** of:

PROPOSED BILL NO. 1010

***AN ACT CONCERNING EXPOSURE TO INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND
EMERGENCY RESPONDERS***

Today, I am joining my colleagues with the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters Association and the Connecticut Council of Police Unions (AFSCME15) regarding a health and safety risk to our public safety professionals. There are many hazards associated with being a police officer or public safety professional. It is a dangerous occupation. The nature of our work causes us to interact with a variety of persons across the socio-economic spectrum. Often times, we assist and care for people that have infectious disease(s).

Many people do not have health insurance, along with regular affordable access to healthcare. Our country struggles with this issue annually, while the debate on universal healthcare dominates our public policy discussions.

Recently there has been renewed interest in maintaining and improving the privacy of our individual medical information. This has prevented healthcare providers from notifying personnel when they have been exposed to someone with infectious disease(s). We recognize the importance and need for such laws. We also recognize the importance of notifying our public safety providers when we are exposed to an infectious disease. This act would ensure that hospitals notify public safety organizations and their personnel when they have been exposed to someone with an infectious disease, so that treatment of the individual can occur. It would also reduce the additional exposure of the disease to others, by awareness and treatment of the exposed emergency services employee. This notification would be done without revealing the identity of the ill person, recognizing their right to privacy.

I would like to close by urging this committee to pass legislation to allow hospitals to notify emergency service organizations and their personnel when they have been exposed to infectious disease(s). The health and welfare of our public safety personnel, our families and the communities we serve require such an act.

March 3, 2009

CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION
Steven Rief, President